

REMARKS

By the amendments requested herein, Applicants have added a specific reference to the earlier-filed patent application for which the present application claims the benefit of priority, in accordance with 35 U.S.C. §120, and have canceled Claims 1-16 and added new Claims 17-27. After entry of the present preliminary amendment Claims 17-27 will be pending.

Applicant wishes to point out to the Examiner that the new claims added in this continuation are similar as Claims 17-26 issued in U.S. Patent 6,609,148 ("the '148 patent"), identified in this amendment as a related case. These claims are added to obtain coverage on additional statutory classes of claims.


Applicant also brings to the Examiner's attention that the specification for the '148 patent and the current case contains the same subject matter as it pertains to the newly added claims in this continuation.

CONCLUSION

In the unlikely event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicants petition for any required relief including extensions of time and authorize the Assistant Commissioner to charge the cost of such petition and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 17-0026**.

Respectfully submitted,

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